

Proposal Title	Reforming the Justice System in Albania - ensuring a transparent, inclusive and accessible process.
Reserve Fund	European Reserves Fund
Collaborating Programs	Open Society Foundation for Albania (OSFA)
Recommended by	Jordi Vaquer
Amount Requested	USD 450,000
Unforeseen Need (250 words)	<p>In November 2014, the Albanian Parliament established an ad hoc parliamentary Commission on Justice Reform. It confirmed the increasing pressure from the European Union and clear messages from the main European capitals to expeditiously adopt a comprehensive reform, including constitutional amendments. This process is the most important legislative reform since the approval of the Constitution in 1998.</p> <p>A group of legal experts, both domestic and international will assist the ad hoc Commission. Six of these experts are associated with OSFA and two staff members will engage as experts with working groups on anticorruption and constitutional reform. The momentum builds on OSFA's recent years' initiatives to reform the justice system and work on constitutional reform. OSFA is implementing the concept of Constitutional Reform, constituting one of the most important components of its 2014-2017 Strategy. The progress to date has significantly raised the profile of OSFA's work as a leading thinker and an impartial, non-partisan stakeholder.</p> <p>During his December visit to Tirana, Mr. Soros endorsed the engagement of the Foundation in the reform at discussions with the OSFA board and confirmed the commitment of the OSF to engage and support the reform in separate meetings held with Prime Minister Rama and head of the opposition Mr. Basha. Recognising the Foundation's role, the chair of the parliamentary Commission submitted a request for support for expertise and financial support; the Parliament and OSFA signed a memorandum of understanding.</p> <p>The need is time-sensitive because the parliamentary committee for the reform is already in place.</p>

Activities Proposed (500 words)	<p>Under the terms of the cooperation with the parliamentary Commission, OSFA will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Assign three senior legal experts who will provide legal and strategic advice to the Commission and its Technical Secretariat. The experts will also serve as the Foundation's representatives in these structures. . Contribute to the selection of the best domestic expertise available to advise the process. . Support the set up and management of a Public Relations office as well as a website dedicated to the justice reform to ensure transparency and consultation with interested groups. . Support the organization/convening of the meetings of expert groups for each of the six reform working groups. . Support the organization/convening of five roundtables to foster analytical discussions on the justice system situation; and five regional roundtables to collect feedback on the draft Justice Reform Strategy, followed by a national conference. . Support/provide advice in the drafting of specific amendments to the Albanian Constitution and main legal acts related to the justice system (through expertise, public consultation and convening of interested groups). <p>Expected Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . The project will support the strengthening of the rule of law in Albania by contributing to an open, transparent, inclusive and accessible process that will lay the grounds for a radical transformation of the justice system; . It will recommend measures for the prevention and punishment of corruption within the justice system as a key factor for the consolidation of independence, accountability and credibility of the justice system. . Propose structural changes regarding the role and position of the High Court and its composition, Prosecutor's office and equally important, the composition and functioning of the High Council of
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	<p>Justice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . A successful reform process is key to opening the accession talks with the EU, specifically talks on Chapters 23 and 24. Equally important, a positive outcome, both in terms reform and its process, is crucial to a provision of a long-term financial aid of approximately 40 million Euros from the European Union to implement the reform in the coming years. <p>All activities will be completed within a year from the approval date.</p> <p>Since the ad hoc Commission has already started its work, an expedited response to the present request is necessary in order to effectively engage with the justice reform effort and to ensure an all-inclusive, professional and transparent process.</p>
Statement of who within OSF would lead the work	<p>The Parliament's Technical Secretariat, led by the General Secretary (chief civil servant) of the Albanian Parliament will carry out the day-to-day management, in close cooperation with the Foundation, led by the Executive Director and program coordinator, supported by a member of the OSFA team that will be placed to the Parliament for the duration of the project.</p>
Contributions expected from various units within OSF and essential partners or grantees (250 words)	<p>The staff of OSF Albania will be reinforced with the arrival of an Albanian Justice Initiative staff member, who will work on the project on the long term. This ensures both local and international expertise, and the increase in capacity without which OSF Albania would not have been able to lead the project with full guarantees.</p>